About This Report—Student Pathways

What It Means

The **Student Pathways** report shows student-level information on college enrollment, coursework, cumulative credit, program and award information, and grade point averages (GPAs) earned by Michigan high school graduates.

The data are important because feedback is provided at the student level, delivering information about postsecondary level achievement to users in either the postsecondary or K-12 environments. K-12 users can see the postsecondary achievement of students previously enrolled in the school district. Postsecondary users can see the high school assessment and graduation data, and any postsecondary achievement, of students who have attended their college or university.

The data is also in compliance with state law Section 283(1) and Section 284(2) of Public Act 201, 2012, which requires Michigan's public 4-year universities to inform our high schools and community colleges of the academic status of their students. Because these data are accessible online in a comprehensive format, high schools and community colleges no longer need to request the report from 4-year universities.

The report is based on matching student records at the K-12 and postsecondary levels. Colleges and universities obtain Unique Identification Codes (UICs) for their students to protect their privacy, and they submit transcript data for their students annually.

Authorized users can receive data for an individual student or for groups of students. Four data files are available to authorized users:

- **Basic Student Data File.** Contains one row for each session that a student is enrolled in a college or university, including high school assessment data, session achievement, and cumulative achievement.

- **Courses File.** Includes a listing of the student's achievement in each course in which the student was enrolled.

- **Programs and Concentrations.** Lists the majors, programs, and concentrations in which the student has been enrolled.

- **Awards, Degrees and Certificates.** Lists all awards, degrees, and certificates completed by the student.

The Student Pathways report was developed in collaboration with a workgroup of secondary, community college, university, and higher education association representatives.

Why It Matters

Exploring the **Student Pathways** report can answer questions like:

How well does my school or college prepare students for advanced work?	The Basic Student Data File contains the cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA), the total number of credits earned at an institution, and the student's two latest college awards and programs. The Courses File also contains course grade status and numeric grade. The Awards, Degrees, and Certificate File shows the top four degrees that a student has earned at an institution.

Does my school or college better prepare students for certain types of academic work?	The Programs and Concentrations File contains the code, when provided, from the federal Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) indicating a discipline or field of study. College cumulative GPA, number of credits earned, and college awards from the Basic Student Data File can be joined.
What programs or concentrations do students enroll in after leaving my school or college?	The Basic Student Data File contains the name of the two primary programs in which each student is reported. College cumulative GPA, number of credits earned, and college awards can be summarized from the program reported. Up to four programs are available in the Programs and Concentrations file.
What awards, degrees and certificates do students earn after they leave my school or college?	The Basic Student Data File contains the name of the two highest college awards for each student. College awards can be summarized from the program reported. Up to four awards are available in the Awards, Degrees and Certificates file.
Which colleges or universities do students enroll in after they leave my school or college?	The Basic Student Data File contains the names of each college or university the student attended. These data can be summarized with data analysis tools, like a pivot table.
Were students concurrently enrolled in other colleges or universities while they were enrolled in my college?	The Basic Student Data File contains the names of each college or university that the student attended along with college entry date and sessions attended.
What students enroll in remedial courses after they leave my school or college?	The Basic Student Data File contains flags indicating whether students were enrolled in remedial classes in math, reading, science, or writing. The Courses File provides a flag for each course students were enrolled in, indicating whether the course was considered remedial by the college or university that reported it.

About the Data

The **Student Pathways** report contains data from two postsecondary sources. All Michigan public colleges and universities and a few Michigan independent (nonpublic) colleges report their students' transcript information to the Student Transcript and Academic Record Repository (STARR) collection annually. The Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) also obtains data from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) to include students enrolled at Michigan independent (nonpublic) and out-of-state colleges. These data sources are merged to eliminate duplicate information.

The Basic Student Data File provides a summary of information about the high school, high school assessments, indicators of remedial coursework taken, and degree attainment. The additional files are provided in to share more complete information about each student's postsecondary enrollment.

The files can be loaded into a relational database so it can be joined to form complete records for each student.

When using Student Pathways data, keep these details in mind:

- Some fields may be blank on the data file because the student didn't attend a Michigan high school, was not in the STARR collection, or was only found in the NSC data.

- The data file provides cumulative grade point average (GPA) earned by students at the college(s) they attended. But, not all of the colleges that report via STARR provided cumulative GPA data, and NSC does not report cumulative GPA for student records. We expect cumulative GPA collected in STARR to improve in future data collections, which will be updated in the data files.

- NSC data does not provide session names, so when CEPI merges NSC data with STARR data, we calculated a session name from the NSC data. Because of this, it's possible that a student's NSC session record may not match a student's STARR record.

Terms of Use. These reports are supplied on the condition that only authorized representatives are able to view and use the data for auditing or evaluating a Federal or State-supported education program, in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Under FERPA, these restricted use data can only be used for program evaluation purposes.

By accessing any data in a secure report, the user agrees to comply with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Privacy Act of 1974, the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, as well as the Secure Report Use Policies outlined on the mischooldata.org website.

Additional Resources.
- Student Pathways How-to Guide for K-12 is a step-by-step guide to downloading the K-12 data.

- Student Pathways How-to Guide for Colleges is a step-by-step guide to downloading the postsecondary data.

- Data File Layout document provides the names and descriptions of all fields included in the Student Pathways files.

- The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) website provides definitions of CIP (Classification of Instructional Programs) codes used in the data file.

Data Collection

These Student Pathway files are based on data collected from CEPI's Student Transcript and Academic Record Repository (STARR) collection and the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). All public colleges participate in the STARR collection, but currently only a few independent colleges do. The NSC is used to locate transfer students who attend colleges that do not submit data in STARR, which includes any out-of-state colleges and several Michigan independent (nonpublic) colleges. However, not every college in the U.S. submits data to the NSC, so not every student can be located; there may be students whose postsecondary work isn't reflected in these reports.

- For more information on the data elements collected in the STARR application, please refer to the STARR Data Manual or visit CEPI's Institutions of Higher Education website.

- For more information on the data collected for high school students in the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS), please visit CEPI's MSDS website.

- For more information on the ACT and Michigan Merit Exam (MME), please visit the Michigan Department of Education website.

Data Calculations

Data calculations in the Student Pathways files are listed in the Data File Layout document.